

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2018 Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program Organizational Components

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-18-101

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: March 26, 2018

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to manage the FY 2018 Organizational Components of the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. The FLEX program addresses U.S. foreign policy goals by supporting a stable, more peaceful world with less conflict and more common ground. The FLEX program provides scholarships for high school students from Europe and Asia to live and study in the United States for an academic year. In turn, these students expose U.S. citizens to the culture, traditions, and lifestyles of people of their home countries. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) are invited to submit proposals to: (1) recruit and select international students from designated countries; (2) provide orientations for all participants; (3) coordinate travel and logistics; (4) liaise with ECA, U.S. embassies and natural families; (5) provide advice and counseling for students and placement organizations (POs); (6) provide two Civic Education Workshops; and (7) provide activities, events and follow-on alumni programs that promote civil society, leadership, and mutual understanding. ECA intends to award one cooperative agreement for approximately \$11,841,240, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds. Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

A. Program Description

A.1. Authority: Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

A.2. Purpose: The FLEX program provides approximately 922 high school students from Europe and Asia with an opportunity to live in the United States for the purpose of

promoting mutual understanding between our countries. Current countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine; additional countries may include, but are not limited to, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In addition, Russia, Belarus and Uzbekistan (previous FLEX countries) may return to the program in the future and applicant organizations should demonstrate the willingness and ability to recruit in these countries should it become possible to do so. Programmatic activities will introduce students to youth leadership, civic education, civil society, and community service. All participants will reside with American host families and attend high school during the 2019-20 academic year. Qualified organizations may submit a proposal to administer a cooperative agreement managing the program as described below.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA's Youth Programs Division is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2018

Approximate Total Funding: \$11,841,240 pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$11,841,240 pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Floor of Award Range: None.

Ceiling of Award Range: \$11,841,240 pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Anticipated Award Date: June 2018.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2021.

Additional Information: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

C. Eligibility Information

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award up to \$11,841,240 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- c.) Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D. Application and Submission Information

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact the Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, or email FLEX@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal

preparation. It also contains the POGI document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify FLEX Program Officer Amy Schulz and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

D.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the POGI document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the

initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

D.3d. Non-Profit Status: You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. FFATA Report: In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. Verifying Non-Profit Status: If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. SAMS Domestic: All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). SAMS Domestic will utilize three ILMS modules to support the Federal Financial Assistance Award process including the SAMS Domestic portal a.k.a. Service Now; Ariba; and Status Tracking a.k.a. the Federal Award File. To register as a SAMS Domestic user, please

click the “create an account” link at <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. Organizations that have previously used SAMS Domestic do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

In the event you are having difficulty registering, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3h ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this NOFO, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this NOFO will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your

project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please consider the following information when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$11,841,240, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) All international and domestic travel for participants and for staff and volunteers as needed to conduct and support program requirements. International travel for staff should be limited to what is essential for the success of the program, and detailed justification of such must be included in the Budget Narrative.
- 2) Costs associated with monitoring students, trouble-shooting, counseling, and resettling students, as necessary

- 3) Program materials (an explanation of how materials are used must be included in the proposal)
- 4) Administrative costs, including salaries, communications, and supplies
- 5) Promotional material, including website development and maintenance
- 6) Alumni activities
- 7) Travel for at least two staff members to Washington, D.C. to attend the two-day Youth Programs Annual Meeting, as well as funds for a meeting with ECA Program and Grants Office staff within 30 days of the award to review and clarify expectations for performance. Note: At least one staff member attending each of these activities must be from the organization's financial administration office responsible for this award.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: **March 26, 2018**

Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of

submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3r. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1 REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

- 1. Quality of Program Idea and Program Planning:** Your proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission and design. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview, timetable and guidelines described in the POGI. Your proposal should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program's objectives, how your organization will achieve them, and how recruitment targets can be achieved. Recruitment plans should include clear procedures for

overcoming challenges, such as coping with difficulties that might arise from the governments in any of the target countries.

2. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity in all program aspects including participants (exchange students and hosts), staffing, content of orientations, program activities, resource materials, and follow-on activities. Proposals should articulate a diversity plan, not just a statement of compliance.
3. **Organization's Record and Institutional Capacity:** Your proposal must demonstrate a well-established infrastructure in recruitment countries or a thoughtful plan on establishing recruitment capacity where it doesn't currently exist. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the Program's goals and outcomes. Reviewers will assess the applicant and its sub-recipients, if any, to determine if they offer adequate resources, expertise, and experience to fulfill program objectives. Recipient and sub-recipient responsibilities and activities should be clearly defined. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with reporting and J-1 Visa regulatory requirements. Past performance of recipients will be considered and organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors must include a discussion of their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements. Proposals that fail to include the above information in their narrative will be deemed less or not competitive under this review criterion. ECA will review the record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq. of organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors as one factor in evaluating the organization's record and institutional capacity to carry out successful exchange programs.
4. **Follow-on Activities:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual ties both during the exchange and after the participants return home. Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with alumni to ensure that they are tracked over time, utilized and/or organized as alumni, and provided opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills they acquired on the exchange and share them with others.
5. **Program Evaluation:** The proposal narrative must demonstrate how the applicant plans to assess the program's success in achieving program objectives and efficient operations, and what instruments will be employed to evaluate the program, including pre-departure and post-program orientations.
6. **Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** Budgets must be accurate, clear, and cost-effective. Applicants must include a budget narrative, which is separate from the proposal narrative that clarifies formulas used and costs that require further explanation and/or justification. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as

low as possible. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. Proposals that demonstrate a high quality, cost-effective program will be deemed more competitive under this criterion.

F.) Federal Award Administration Information

F.1 Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#). SAMS

Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for US callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request

F.4. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Amy Schulz (schulzaj@state.gov, 202-632-6052), U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3rd Floor 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Jennifer Zimdahl Galt

January 24, 2018

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State